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ABSTRACT

The development and functioning of urban social networks in highly politicized environments--particularly, the neighborhood based community organization, political coalition building of urban mayors, and community action programs--suggest implications for building locally based educational reform capacity through network development. Community organizations are useful political resources that over time tend to assume and adopt a distinct mode of operation involving either community development, social planning, or social action. The adoption of one specific mode of operation is related to group ethos and relationships with the external community, as well as the role of group leadership and staff. Research involving leadership and staff suggest that full-time outside professionals, incentives, tactics, and friendship networks, along with the organizational attachments of and rewards for members, affect network development. Kotter and Lawrence's study of mayoral coalition building identifies strategies and tactics useful in developing and maintaining networks. Federally funded community action programs have been the most successful in linking social and political reform through network and institution building, although such achievements have been largely unrecognized. Sustained and sincere federal commitment was and still remains crucial. Insights and tactical issues from these social groupings can be applied to the establishment of education-related networks. (CHM)

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SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A POLITICAL RESOURCE: SOME INSIGHTS DRAWN FROM THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTION EXPERIENCES

prepared for the Network Development Staff
School Capacity for Problem Solving Group
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The purpose of this essay is to briefly examine recent work in urban political science and that area of scholarship where the disciplines of social work and political science intersect in their mutual concern for community organization and politics. This is being done in order to develop some insights that might be of modest value to anyone seeking to institute and/or understand the use of social networks as a strategy for promoting local organizational reform capacity. There are a number of reasons why such an enterprise might be of some utility, not the least of which is that the decade of the 60's represented an era in which neighborhood residents all across the country, (as well as the students of politics and social welfare who both encouraged and observed) were engaged to an unprecedented degree in trying to reform their local institutions. While many of these efforts were at best only partially successful, they have nevertheless produced a reservoir of considerable experience as regards what helps and what hinders attempts to organize locally based reform. Perhaps equally as important they have also generated a body of, if not certificable knowledge, at least reasonably provocative theory about the processes of change, resistance to change and governance which normally characterize the operations of such systems.

In this paper I shall be especially concerned with the manner in which urban social networks function in the kind of highly politicized environments in which reform efforts are normally undertaken. Since the bodies of literature to which I will look for these insights have only rarely focused directly upon the general phenomenon of informal social networks I shall be looking in the first instance at what might

be characterized in one sense as a surrogate for, or alternatively a very specialized form of network, the neighborhood based community organization. To draw insights about the operation and function of networks from such a source is I would argue not inappropriate since at its essence, the establishment of a neighborhood based community organization represents a form of purposive networking of previously disparate elements of a frequently highly anomic community. Moreover such insight as is available from this experience should be especially useful if one seeks to create networks of parents as well as educators.

I will then turn to an elite centered form of network development—the process of political coalition building that urban mayors engage in during the course of their tenure in office. After having examined these processes, I shall look at another surrogate form of network development—this time an externally induced one—the federally funded community action programs. In addition to being suggestive about the capacity of the federal government to serve as an external catalyst to local reform, the community action endeavors frequently brought elite and non-elite political actors together in a common network. Hence our examination of it should be useful for sheding some light on this phenomenon as well. The paper will then conclude with an effort to suggest what some of the implications of the material examined might be for building locally based educational reform capacity through network development. While my primary concern throughout will be with insights relevant for understanding the functions of networks, my secondary interest will be with the more general problems of facilitating locally based reform.

Community Organization:
Surrogates for Membership Focused Networks

Although there are roots that are traceable to the settlement movement of the turn of the century, not to mention certain elements of the American Labor movement, one can persuasively argue that the notion of the community organization as a locally based change agent began when the late Saul Alinsky organized the Back of the Yards Organization in a lower class white ethnic neighborhood of Chicago in the late 1930's. The probable high point of this movement came a quarter century later with the development of The Woodlawn Organizaion again aided by Alinsky and located in Chicago, but this time in a black neighborhood.[1] Today virtually every large and medium sized city is the site of one or more such organizations, many of which are the results of Alinsky organizing efforts.

There are numerous reasons which help to explain why there has been something of a burgeoning of community organizations in urban neighborhoods around the country. Such groups are it has been suggested but one manifestation of an increasing concern about place, order and community. Others have attributed this phenomenon to the increasing complexity of the issues facing the neighborhood based community.[2]

In helping the residents of particular communities to clarify and cope with complicated problems, such organizations represent but a contemporary manifestation of the extraordinary capacity for local problem solving that Alexis De Tocquenille attributed to Americans a century and a half ago. "If," De Tocqueville wrote in commenting upon this quality, "a stoppage occurs in a thoroughfare, and the circulation of vehicles is hindered, the neighbors immediately form themselves into a deliberative body; and this extemporaneous assembly gives rise to an executive power which remedies the inconvenience before anybody has thought of recurring to a pre-existing authority superior to that of the persons immediately concerned."[3]

More often than not however, it appears that community organizations come into existence because they represent a useful response to an external (and occasionally internal) threat to a community's well being. In a word, they are a useful political resource. In the absence of money and/or established recognition and influence there is, as Saul Alinsky preached, power in bringing people together through organization.[4] To say just that however is to oversimplify since the power that results from organization comes not merely from numbers or the

fact of an organization but from a host of more elemental conditions. Among other things, the introduction into an unorganized community of a reasonably effective organization (readers of this essay should here substitute "network" for "organization"):

1) encourages the communication of relevant information among members;

2) facilitates the mobilization of the resources of many desperate individuals toward a particular purpose;

3) lessens the likelihood of internal division within a community in the face of externally imposed policies;

4) enables one member of a community to gain access to the resources of others;

5) provides social support for individual members of a community thus increasing the sense of efficacy of each;

6) lessens the likelihood of duplication of effort and wasted energy among members;

7) allows less experienced participants to draw upon the insights of more experienced ones; and,

8) facilitates the drawing into the community of friendly outside resources.[5]

While there are a variety of benefits that result from community organization there are also in certain circumstances some disadvantages which must be taken into account. It is not unknown for participants in such organizations to become so involved in their internal dynamics as to become totally preoccupied with them and lose touch with the real purposes for which the organization was created. Likewise even the most economically depressed neighborhoods possesses some organizations, be they church groups or gangs. The creation of a community organization can produce not only turf problems, but may result in the draining of energy from the other organizations.[6] Perhaps the most serious problem that must be confronted however is the tendency for such groups to become locked into a particular style of operations which may after the passage of time become counter-productive.

While many funtioning community organizations manifest characteristics that are peculiarly their own it becomes evident as one examines them, that they do over time tend to assume one of what are essentially three district modes of operation.[7] The first of these modes or styles of operation has been characterized as involving community development. Groups that persue this strategy operate from the premise that the key problem facing their community is a lack

communication and purpose. Thus the goal of such groups is to bring all elements of a community (different classes, different ethnic groups, etc.) together to join in commonly supported projects. The second style of operation which community organizations tend to adopt has been characterized as a social planning model. Groups adopting this strategy are normally found in more prosperous communities, and operate on the presumption that their key tasks revolve around long term, locally oriented planning and analysis. The third type of community organization style may be characterized as the social action model. This type of group operates on the presumption that the main problem they face is a larger community characterized by an unjust hierarchy of power and priviledge. Their task therefore is to mobilize adequate resources to enable them to confront an unyielding "establishment."

Perhaps, at least from the point of view of one seeking insights that might be readily transferrable to a slightly different context, the most interesting aspect of these three types of community organizations is just how distinct they tend to be in operation. While it is not unknown for an organization which has adopted one style of operation to assume one of the other modes, this appears to happen less frequently than one might expect. Moreover the process of an

organization moving from one mode of operations to another is not a fast one. A case in point is the aforementioned Woodlawn Organization, which from 1962 to 1967 might quite accurately have been characterized as the nation's most prominent social action oriented community organization. Today it is probably more aptly characterized as falling into the "social planning" style. The journey from "social action" to "social planning" modes of operations was neither quick nor easy.[8] It required a ten year period and was marked by considerable, internal stress as occasional rancorous conflict over mission and tactics arose within the organization.

The reasons that a particular group becomes wedded to a specific mode of operations are not that hard to understand as one examines these organizations in operation. Perhaps the two key factors are the matters of group ethos and relationships with the external community.[9] Indeed, each of these factors serves to reinforce the other. The social action oriented community organization must, if it is to sustain itself, imbue its membership with a strong "we against thee" ethos. To maintain this ethos, it is normally necessary that the group engage in some form of ongoing conflict with those who are against it. Needless to

say, the more successfully the group pursues their tactics the more imbued its membership becomes with the ethos of conflict and the more difficult it becomes to shift modes of operation. In contrast neighborhood organizations that operate in the "community development" mode are built on the premise of cooperation and the building of bridges between "the establishment" and the community at large. To engage in a social action or conflict strategy will, at least for some members, undermine the purpose of the organization and probably produce its disolution.[10]

Another factor that tends to cause these organizations to adopt one mode of operations on a more or less permanent basis to the exclusion of the other two is the role of group leadership and staff. Each style of organization requires a particular kind of leadership and pattern of staff activity. Shifting approaches in the mid life of such a group is often a difficult if not impossible task for the staff as well as the organization. The "community development" style organization requires of its leadership a highly facilitative and cooperative style of operation. When such groups have staff, the staff will normally have been trained or at least exposed to T group and human relations problem solving type techniques.

Their mode of operations will often be characterized by the desire to bring more and more people into the group's activities--in one manner or another. In contrast "social planning" oriented groups usually place great reliance upon the use of highly trained professional research and analysis staff.[11] This tends to cause the life of these groups to center more directly upon the activities of their staff professionals. It also requires such a group to work very closely with (many would argue come under the domination of) the business and government organizations and agencies from which it normally must seek the funds necessary to sustain its cadre of professional staff (not to mention the access necessary to enable its plans and programs to have some chance of being adopted).[12]

Social Action Organizations, Staffing and Adaptability

The role of leadership and staff in the social action type community organization is particularly fascinating and perhaps especially relevant as regards the establishment of networks. It is not unlikely that there would be some parallel between certain of the issues that are involved in the establishment of a social action type of community organization and the role of staff in the establishment of a network. Social action oriented community organizations are it appears no less dependent upon

their leaders and their staff than are social planning ones.[13] Such groups composed, as they often are, of folks who must devote an extraordinary amount of time to every day life activities, require an inordinate amount of attention to the most elemental maintenance activities. Sustaining continuous communication links among participants, who in more than a few instances may not have regular access to telephones, is in itself potentially a full time task. Likewise the organizational experience of the group's members may not be great. These conditions not only place great burdens on leaders but make the availability of effective staff support a virtual prerequisite to successful operations. The position of such staff is however an ambiguous one. It must be extraordinarily skilled, while being able to maintain rapport with participants. This latter condition usually requires that the staff be a part of the community if the organization is to prosper. Outsiders are, as was illustrated in Herbert Gan's study of the West End of Boston, usually unable to gain the trust of group participants.[14]

To the extent that there is a body of wisdom on such matters it has developed out of the practices of Saul Alinsky. The Alinsky approach—one which since it has emerged out of experience in many cities and many contexts deserves to be considered carefully—holds that the key to the successful development of a community organization is the introduction of full-time outside professionally trained staff for a specific period of time after which they withdraw totally from the organization.[15] The outsiders are then replaced by full-time professionals from the neighborhood who have, as a consequence of having served in apprenticeship type roles under the Alinsky staff, become professionals themselves. As such they have learned the tactics and ethos of the Alinsky approach to community organization. Moreover having undergone this training, they remain a part of a loose network of folks who have shared this experience.

In part as a result of this training one will sometimes find the leadership staff of an Alinsky oriented organization more willing and able to move from one mode or style of community organizational activity to another than the membership of the organization. The reason for this is that those who undergo the training came to recognize that the "ethos

of conflict" which dominates the ideological life of most such organizations is primarily a tactic for engaging an apathetic mass in the life of the group. As such, the skilled and pragmatic leader realizes that when appropriate other methods should be adopted. Having not experienced the Alinsky training however, the membership of the organization is often not quite so ready to shift organizational gears.

There are several other issues emerging out of the community organization experience in addition to those focusing around matters of purpose and adaptability that have some relevance for those seeking to engage in network development as a reform strategy. Among these are the role of incentives, the use of tactics and the impact of friendship networks on community organization. The impact of member friendship relations (informal social networks) on community organizations has been explored by Matthew Crenson in a pair of excellent articles.[16] Loose-knit neighborhoods (ones in which a member's friends also reside in the same neighborhood but, unlike tight-knit neighborhoods, the member's friends often do not know each other) tended to produce community organizations that most accurately and adequately reflected the community's interests.[17] This was in part because communication flowed more freely and effectively in

such groups. Such groups were however far more susceptible to breakdown into factions which would engage in virulent internal conflicts than were community organizations that developed in tight-knit or cosmpolitan communities (ones in which the friends of community members were more likely to reside outside of the community). These findings appear to suggest something of a paradox for those who would promote the creation of networks. They seem to imply that the most effective network (one in which the members share some degree of common acquaintanceship, but not an intense relationship to one another) may be the most fragile network to sustain.

Another finding of Crenson's also raises issues which ought to be taken into account by organizers of network activity. In his initial study of the community organizational activity occuring in seven neighborhoods in Baltimore, Crenson found that "the likelihood of internal conflict in a community association is enhanced by the presence of members who have numerous outside organizational attachments."[18] Such attachments apparently also serve as a basis for the development of dehabilitating factionalism within these groups. The implication here it seems, is that the inclusion within a network of people who are already members of active networks may be destabilizing to the new network.

Insofar as the matter of material incentives, the key point involves the critical significance of tangible material incentives in sustaining the life of an organization. This has especially been the case insofar as "social action" organizations have been concerned.[19] While this is no doubt in part attributable to the low income status of the membership of most such organizations, it is by no means clear that this is the only factor involved.

Regardless of the cause there is considerable evidence which suggests that whatever their long range purposes, such groups function best when they are engaged in a steady stream of projects that produce immediate tangible rewards for members. As a consequence the group which seeks, say desegregation of housing and schools as a long term goal, ought also to focus upon getting building inspectors to enforce building codes and school officials to upgrade the facilities of the neighborhood school. In this regard it is crucial that one pick ones targets carefully. Trying to confront a distant and difuse welfare bureacracy might produce no results thus totally demoralizing the organization while protesting the unfair practices of the local super market can produce both positive change and increased group morale. By analogy one might argue that whatever the long range purposes for creating a network, it will be useful to structure it in such a fashion that attractive and immediate tangible benefits can be gained through participation. One means of doing this that has been demonstrably effective in the development of community organizations is to have the new entity focus upon obtaining benefits that are legitimately available to participants but which do to some complexity of circumstance they had not been able to previously obtain.[20]

Elite Centered Networks--
the Political Coalitions of Urban Leaders

While the notion, as well as the fact of networks are and have been significant concerns for students of American politics, the theoretical construct of the "network" has rarely been relied upon by political scientists. Thus unlike such sister disciplines as sociology, geography and anthropology, one does not in political science find a rich body of "network" research to be mined by those seeking insights useful in the establishment or sustenance of a network. Nevertheless the absence of a tradition of "network" research does not mean the absence of relevant insights. The fact is that many of the subjects to which political scientists have devoted their attention in a very real sense involve the building of "networks." Most notable perhaps in this respect is the kind of coalition building activities in which politicians, engage.

For the purpose of obtaining a good overview of both the manner in which the task of network building is carried out as well as to a lesser degree its consequences, it is useful to look in some detail at a recently completed study of urban mayors. This study, which summarizes and builds upon numerous prior studies of local politicians in action is, along with the work of Crenson, one of the very few research efforts in the area of urban political processes which formally adopts the notion of "network" as an organizing construct. Ironically, or perhaps not so ironically, it was, carried out not by political scientists but rather by two professors at the Harvard Business School—John Kotter and

Paul Lawrence. In their study of the mayors of 20 middle-sized cities (150,000 to 750,000 population) who held office during the sixties, Mayors in Action,[21] Kotter and Lawrence find that mayoral activities fall for the most part into three general categories: 1. agenda setting; 2. network building; and 3. task accomplishing processes.

The first of these three categories of activity involves the development of mayoral goals and objectives. The relevant patterns of mayoral behavior can be arrayed along a continum that ranges from reactive, non-initiatory, "muddling through behavior" to, at the opposite end, what has come to be known as the "rational planning" model of agenda setting in which alternatives are carefully weighed and analyzed for short and long term impact. The third category of activity, "task accomplishing," involves the administrative implementation of the "mayor's goals and objectives (developed through agenda setting) by either bureaucratic (reliance on city agencies), entrepreneurial (reliance upon outside groups), or personal actions.

Of particular interest for the purposes of this essay are the Kotter and Lawrence findings regarding the network building processes in which the twenty mayors engage. There was one primary and one secondary purpose for which they undertook network development activity and a half dozen or so tactics that they frequently used in their building of them. The purposes which motivated these political leaders to engage in network development were quite predictable; their tactics of network building perhaps slightly less so. The primary purpose for

network development activity was to sustain their political careers through the building of necessary electoral bases; their second purpose was to provide themselves with the resources (in terms of allies, outside information and the like) which were necessary to facilitate the adoption of that particular set of goals and objectives that had emerged out of their agendizing processes.

Three strategies or tactics stood out as the ones most frequently used by mayors in building their networks—discrete exchange, personal friendship and to a slightly lesser degree, an appeal to shared positive goals. Discrete exchange is just what it sounds like; the maintenance of a collaborative relationship through an appeal to the immediate (as opposed to long run) self-interest of the parties involved. It required that each participant possess some resource (money, jobs, information, support) which they could exchange for another resource that is perceived as equally desirable. Such a network maintaining tactic might be characterized as involving considerable cost (in the sense of their having to be a continuing flow of resources to be exchanged) but little ambiguity in the sense that the purpose for participating is generally fairly clear cut.

Personal friendship is perhaps an even more self-evident strategy; the network relationship is maintained as a result of the mutually shared friendship. The major costs for participants are time and (especially if the network operates in a hostile environment) the

need to in some instances shape ones own relationships in such a fashion as to not alienate ones partners in the network. Network building through an appeal to shared positive goals is in the short run, the least costly strategy in terms of the expenditure of member resources of the three most frequently used mayoral tactics for network sustenance. Here, the members of the network have come together for a common purpose (in the case of a mayoral centered network this might be rebuilding downtown, ending community poverty or combating pornography). The problem with such a strategy is that each of the network members may have differing perceptions of the importance of the shared purpose and thus may differ in their willingness to bear short term costs in order to achieve the ultimate goal they all seek. Likewise there may be considerable difference of opinion as to how rapidly one should be moving towards the goal and when it has been achieved. Such differences of opinion can result in the breakdown of the network.

Used on the average about half as frequently as the tactics noted above were such strategies as appealing to common reference group membership, shared opposition and hostility, coercion, and the charismatic qualities of a networks central figure. Mutual hostility or shared opposition was the least favored strategy for network building and maintenance, due apparently to its volatility as a means of sustaining a collaborative relationship. Coercion was the next least used of these strategies, not because of its lack of immediate affect, but because of its long run risks in terms of alienating network members. Although

when used with some subtlety (say in combination with certain rewards—"if you don't support me on this, it will cost you dearly; if you do support me, I will see that you get part of the spoils"), this proved an especially useful network maintenance strategy for certain of the more skilled and successful mayors.

Somewhat more frequently used by mayors in building and sustaining their networks were the strategies of shared reference group membership and the reliance upon charismatic qualities. As Kotter and Lawrence suggest, these were, from the point of view of cost and risk, perhaps the most attractive of all network maintenance strategies. They required neither a commitment to policy or program nor the commitment of material resources from the person at the center of the network. The limitations upon the use of such strategies do however go beyond the one problem that Kotter and Lawrence noted, that charismatic leaders are normally in short supply. Contemporary developments in urban politics, most notably the fragmentation and decline of ethnic political machines illustrate the limitations of shared reference group membership in holding together a network of relationships political or otherwise. The fact is that in contemporary society most people identify with many reference groups, ethnic and otherwise; thus stronger bonds are normally required if a network is to be successfully sustained. As regards the capacity of a charismatic leader to serve as the glue that binds a network together, it must be kept in mind that even, for those who have the capacity to be "charismatic," being so often requires the expenditure of an enormous amount of time and psychic resources.

The extent of network building efforts and the number of specific strategies engaged in by any one of these mayors varied greatly. To a considerable degree the extensiveness of the mayor's network building efforts correlated with the ambitiousness of his agendizing activities. A more elaborate Mayoral agenda was likely to go hand in hand with more intensive and extensive network building activities. Not surprisingly, those mayors who build the most extensive networks of support found that there were other spinoff benefits that they derived from them. Among these were access to outside financial resources, different power centers and new information.

A troubling footnote to the work of Kotter and Lawrence, at least for anyone concerned about the quality of democratic politics in the local community, suggested in a fascinating and apparently unreplicated study from about 1970 by Sheldon Bockman and Harlan Hahn. In examining a rural southern California town of 4,000, Bockman and Hahn sought to determine how much of the information possessed by community residents on local public issues had been derived from informal networks that radiated from top community leaders. Using sociometric techniques they identified a three link communication network of 327 individuals radiating out from a group of 35 top community influentials. The researchers then did a random sample survey of the town's population and found that only one in ten community members identified someone other than a member of this communications network as a source of information on public affairs. This reliance of community members upon the communications networks of community leaders provides the opportunity, suggest Bockman and Hahn," for top decision makers to co-opt or manipulate the public by the selective release of information and by maintaining a constant surveillance over the community."[22]

Community Action Programs, Elite-Mass Linkage and Network Development

One is almost embarrassed to suggest that there are positive insights about anything that can be learned by looking at the federal-local experience with community action programs. To do so in either contemporary academic or political circles is not very fashionable. The writings of Daniel Moynihan and Edward Banfield(who argued that the most notable achievement of these efforts was to turn the poor against their primary allies--Democratic politians) and the rantings of Mayors Richard Daley and Hugh Addonizio were persuasive to a degree that they probably did not imagine possible.[22] Aided by the more general attacks emanating from the pens of Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol and others, there has been not only a widespread acquiescence in the notion that the anti-poverty effort failed but it has become generally accepted wisdom that most federal programs aimed at stimulating local reform have been failures.[23]

Granted the community action efforts didn't end poverty but then even their most severe critics will acknowlege that those programs were never funded at anywhere near the levels necessary to even begin that task (while recognizing that, one also should not forget that the most productive days of OEO did parellel an era of significant reductions in poverty and it is not unlikely that these programs while less important than a bomming economy did make some modest contribution). To dismiss community action out of hand for its failure to end poverty is however to ignore a most extraordinary political and social, but

not economic, revolution which has taken place in this country during the past dozen years. This is a social and political revolution in which federally encouraged and locally implemented community action played one of if not the most central of roles. It is the social and political revolution which carried black Americans from Southern fields and Northern ghettos to the halls of the Capitol and the U.N. and helped thousands of minority group members to obtain government and political positions that were unthinkable two decades ago.[24]

Granted these developments are by no means solely attributable to community action. Nevertheless the role of that effort is all too often given short shift vis a vis the civil rights movement and the emergence of black power assertiveness. Very probably it was community action that served as the key linkage between those two movements and the black political and social revolution. While the civil rights and black power movements served as the foundation for these developments it was the rise of black organizational and political power that served as the infrastructure. In no small measure that organizational and political power developed as a by product of the emergence of black municipal bureacuracy which in turn was one of the most important outcomes of community action.

That absorption into municipal government should be a significant step in the process of acquiring political and organizational power by a minority group is hardly surprising. Such an occurance has historically been a crucial step for most of the ethnic groups that have flowed into American society in large number.[25] What makes this process now seem unusual

insofar as blacks have been concerned is that for at least awhile it appeared that it might not occur. Political machines in places like Chicago had become increasingly rigid and exclusionary. In reform cities like Detroit, civil service codes were proving no less significant barriers to black upward mobility than were anti-black ward politicians.[26]

The community action program changed all of this in both types of cities. It did this by creating black anti-poverty bureaucracies which served as both lever and channel for black movement into other city agencies.[27] The result was that, as Paul Peterson and David Greenstone have pointed out in their superb retrospective review of community action, by 1970 local governments employed a greater porportion of blacks than any other U.S. employers and in "the high-prestige occupations of managers and administrators, blacks were employed two and a half times as frequently by local governments as anywhere else in the economy"[28] (the cost of these new positions, which were gained by expanding the numbers of people employed in local governments, is most assuredly a cause of the current fiscal problems of American cities and perhaps in part helps to explain why no one seems very interested in doing very much to help the cities).

Commmunity Action Councils as Functioning Networks

While frequently characterized as a hydra-headed monster, the typical community action program was more like a two-headed aligator. The citizen participation component represented one head; the program or social services component, the other. At some point the two heads joined together to form a strange creation which might on some occasions flail and gyrate with all the ferocity of an angry alligator's tail. If the

blackening of municipal bureaucracies was the outstanding achievement of the social services head of this strange beast,[29] the capacity of its citizen participation structures to serve as networks facilitating the interaction and goal achievement of highly disparate groups and individuals must have been among the most outstanding accomplishments of our alligator's other head. The irony of both of these achievements was that neither was really among the goals sought by those who created the program. The services component was expected to deliver services, not to blacken urban government. The citizen participation component would, depending upon whose view one accepted, either help coordinate services or alternatively help shape the policies regarding service delivery. For the most part it did neither.

In most communities the key vehicle through which both the coordination and the policy shaping was to occur was in theory the local community action council. Sitting astride each city's community's program, these councils would some day gain fame for their structural arrangement of one-third community residents mixed with two-third civic leaders, private and public agency personnel, and government officials (in most larger communities a second level of citizen participation emerged as councils of local residents were created to oversee the activities occuring in their neighborhoods). At the level of the community action councils it quickly became evident that coordination efforts would fail for a lack of both strong incentives and sanctions by which to obtain the cooperation of those agencies whose efforts needed coordinating.[30] The failure of the councils when it came to policy shaping was not quite so clear cut. Many studies have found, as did a group of Brandies

researchers in the most comprehensive of these efforts, that no more than a third of the councils regularly engaged in any kind of serious policy setting efforts.[31] More often than not such councils unintentionally served as a form of federally induced social networks.

As such they brought together a wide variety of people who otherwise probably would not have been in contact with each other. Corporate executives, welfare mothers, voluntary agency workers, community-activists, established politicians and politicians who hoped to become established were but some of those linked together through what in essence were federally mandated elite-mass networks. The results of this coming together were mixed.[32] In some instances the meetings of the community action councils amounted to little more than monthly ritualized gatherings from which after an hour or so of non-participative boredom members went their own way. In many instances however, often after a period of some shouting and hollering, the councils did produce significant multi-directional dialogue, notable information and resources transfer, and upon occasion important coalition building activity.

It is difficult to adequately assess the extent of positive outcomes given a universe of 1200 or so councils, operating in very different contexts, functioning in many different ways and having been the subject of only a comparatively modest amount of research (much of which is not very comparable). Nevertheless some things are clear. The community action councils served as important elements in the process by which funds and resources other than those granted by the federal Office of

Economic Opportunity (OEO) were obtained by the local community action programs. An OEO survey of 591 of these programs "found that between 1965 and 1973 they received $200 million from federal agencies other than OEO and $750 million from other sources, including $200 million from local governments and $285 million from states."[33] Even more remarkable, in some instances previously unthinkable coalitions (Poles and blacks in Detroit; blacks and their white university based antagonists in Chicago) came together either through their participation in or their desire to gain access to community action councils. In a large number, of cities across the country the dialogue begun in community action councils served (along with presidential persuation and federal dollars) to give rise to an unprecedented (if albeit too brief) amount of corporate interest in the problems of poverty and unemployment.[34]

In many communities the understanding of bureaucratic behavior and the connection to external resources obtained by ghetto residents from participating in these councils served them well when they returned to the neighborhood based groups which they were often representing (either informally in their capacity as a generally elected or appointed council member or in other cases quite formally as the directly designated delegate of an organization).[35] Once again the material benefits involved were all too shortlived as federal dollars would begin to shrink and private resources drift away with the economic downturn of the late 60's early 70's. Nevertheless the fact remains that for a brief period of time many local self help organizations were able to get started or, where extant, to significantly expand their

activities due to the linkages created by or the experience and information that resulted from the formation of community action councils. (I am referring here not just to the federally initiated bodies, but to independent community organizations like TWO in Chicago the Ralph Bunche Community Council in Detroit, and the West Side Welfare Recipients League in New York which either took sustenance from or grew out of community action stimulated activities).[36]

That various of the benefits gained by individuals through the participatory component of th community action experience should prove to be usefull for and stimulative of non-governmentally supported community organizational activity is not surprising. The fact is that if no other lesson was learned from the participatory activities of community action, it is that some participation begets more participation. This was first apparent when a spillover quickly emerged from the community action to the model cities citizen councils.[37] Subsequently this participatory ethos spread to matters of education, health care and electoral politics.[38]

There are no doubt a variety of lessons in the tactics of both network and institution building that can be drawn from the community action experience. In the end however, there is one point that stands out as far and away the most significant. Sustained and sincere federal commitment was and no doubt still remains crucial. Without it most if not all of the positive outcomes discussed here would have required much longer and been much more devisive or would not have occurred at all. While the federal effort was being maintained the organizational

life of these communities was, as anyone who ever spent time in one of them knows, becoming vigorous, alive and hopeful. At the same time, while often doing so reluctantly, long unresponsive local governments were responding to legitimate but previously suppressed demands. Granted there was also anxiety, acrimony and ambivalence but what social and political revolution has avoided such by-products. The real tragedy was just how shortlived the whole undertaking was. It flourished just long enough to benefit the natural initial beneficiaries of such events—the long frustrated and suppressed emerging black middle class—but not long enough to begin to have a sustained impact upon the massive black underclass.

Conclusion

Neither a neighborhood based community organization nor a community action council are quite the same thing as a network of school administrators or parent groups. Nevertheless there is probably more similarities among these social groupings than there are dissimilarities; hence this effort at applying the insights from the one context to the other. Perhaps more than anything else this essay has suggested that there are important benefits that can be gained by purposefully linking the previously unlinked. These benefits impact upon both the participating individual as well as the group which they represent, not to mention the network itself. The next most important point that can be drawn from this essay is that while it perhaps did so non-intentionally, the federal government has demonstrated in the form of community action councils that it is feasible for it to establish successful network-like relationships among quite disparate types of individuals.

The community organization experience suggests a number of tactical issues that should at least be considered by those seeking to create network relationships. Reliance upon short-term tangible rewards to stimulate network participation as well as the introduction of knowledgable outside staff expertise for a limited period of time might well be useful tactics to consider using in the establishment of networks. One ought also to take account of the extent to which those whom one would try to link in a network are already adequately linked to other extant networks. One also should be reasonably self-conscious about matters of narrowness of purpose and rigidity that may emerge after the

institution of network relationships. Finally it has been demonstrated that there are many resources available to political elites in the development of their own networks and it has been suggested that these networks may dominate the established channels of communication within a community. Consequently one wonders whether federal officials pursuing a strategy of network development do not have a special responsibility to focus their attention upon those who lack the personal resources to create their own networks and who are presently likely to be almost entirely the passive recipient of communications from networks over which they have no control or influence.

Footnotes

1. On the Back of the Yards Organization see Gurney Breckenfeld, "Chicago: Back of the Yards" in Martin Millspaugh, Gurney Breckenfeld and Miles L. Colean, The Human Side of Urban Renewal (New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1960), pp. 179-219. The most comprehensive and certainly one of the finest of the many accounts of the history of The Woodlawn Organization is John Hall Fish, Black Power, White Control The Struggle of The Woodlawn Organization in Chicago, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970). See also by the organization's long time president, Arthur M. Brazier, Black Self-Determination: The Story of The Woodlawn Organization (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmons Publishing Co., 1969).

2. These issues are explored in among others Curt Lamb, Political Power in Poor Neighborhoods, (New York: Schenkman Publishing, 1975); and Stanley B. Greenberg, Politics and Poverty: Modernization and Response in Five Poor Neighborhoods, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974).

3. This notion is drawn from Mathew Crenson's excellant unpublished manuscript. I have unabashedly stolen the use of this quote from De Tocquenille from Crenson's manuscript. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Vintage Books, 1960) p. 198, as quoted in Mathew Crenson, Social "Networks and Political Processes in Urban Neighborhoods," unpublished manuscript, Johns Hopkins University, January 1977.

4. Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals, (New York: Random House, 1971). See also Alinsky's earlier Reveille for Radicals, (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1969).

5. These attributes of community organization are derived from a variety of sources, among the most useful being Robert Bailey, Jr., Radicals in Urban Politics: The Alinsky Approach, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), especially chapter 8.

6. For an illustration of this problem in a Chicago neighborhood see, Allan Rosenbaum, Manpower Training and Machine Politics in Chicago (Albany, NY: State University of New York, forthcoming).

7. Jack Rothman, Three Models of Community Organization Practice, in Fred M. Cox, et. al., eds, Strategies of Community Organization: A Book of Reading, (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, 1974), pp. 22-38.

8. Fish, op. cit. 1

9. On these points, see, for example William W. Ellis, White Ethics and Black Power: The Emergence of the West Side Organization, (Chicago: Aldine, 1969) and Michael Lipsky and Margaret Levi, "Community Organization as a Political resource" in People and Politics in Urban Society, Harlan Hahn, ed., (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1972), pp. 175-200.

10. Lipsky and Levi, op. cit.

11. See Peter H. Rossi and Robert A. Dentler, et. al., The Politics of Urban Renewal (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961) for a useful case study of a social planning oriented community organization.

12. Ellis, op. cit.

13. Bailey, Jr., op. cit.

14. Herbert J. Gans, The Urban Villagers (New York: The Free Press, 1962).

15. Alinsky, Rules For Radicals op. cit. and Bailey, Jr., op. cit.

16. Crenson, op. cit. and Mathew Crenson, "Organizational Factors in Citizen Participation" The Journal of Politics, r. 36, 1974, pp. 356-378.

17. Crenson, "Social Networks..." op. cit.

18. Crenson, "Organizational Factors..." p. 360.

19. Lawrence N. Bailis, "Organizing the Poor: Some Lessons of the 1960's," Policy Studies Journal, vol. 2, 1974, pp. 210-214.

20. On incentives and community organization, see, Alinsky, Rules For Radicals, op. cit.; and Lipsky and Lipski, op. cit. and Bailis, op. cit.

21. John R. Kotter and Paul R. Lawrence, Mayors in Action: Five Approaches to Urban Governance, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974).

22. Sheldon Bockman and Harlan Hahn, "Networks of Information and Influence in the Community," in Hahn, op. cit., pp. 71-94.

23. Daniel P. Moynihan, Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty, (New York: The Free Press, 1969); Edward C. Banfield, The Unheavenly City, (Boston, Little Brown, 1968). Richard Daley and Hugh Addonizio, among the most vigorous mayoral opponents of community action in its first years, both unleashed vicious attacks on the program during various Congressional hearings. The general opposition of writers like

Nathan Glazer and Irving Kristol to the Federal intervention efforts of the 60's can be found spread across the pages of numerous journals, most notably Commentary and The Public Interest.

24. For an analysis of the dynamics of this process see, "Racial Change and Citizen Participation: The Mobilization of Low Income Communities Through Community Action" by Paul E. Peterson and J. David Greenstone in Robert Haveman, ed., A Ten Year Retrospective on the War on Poverty (New York; Academic Press, forthcoming).

25. On this phenomenon, see Allan Rosenbaum "Machine Politics, Class Interest, and the Urban Poor" Politics and Society, forthcoming.

26. Allan Rosenbaum, "Participation, Programs, and Politics—The Federal Impact on the Metropolis: The Model Cities and Anti-Poverty Efforts in Detroit and Chicago," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1970.

27. ibid.; and, Paul B. Fischer, "The War on Poverty and the Blackening of Urban Bureaucracies," Policy Studies Journal, vol. 2, 1074, pp. 179-186.

28. Peterson and Greenstone, op. cit.

29. In fact it is by no means clear that the emergence of black bureaucracy represents the foremost achievement of the services component of the anti-poverty program. For all their much publicized problems of organization and governance the community action agencies provided a wide range of services (from comparatively inexpensive cultural arts programs to the building of over 100 neighborhood health care centers) to communities that often desperately needed them. See in this regard, Sar A. Levitan and Robert

Taggart, The Promise of Greatness: The Social Programs of the Last Decade and Their Major Achievements (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

30. David Austin, "Resident Participation: Political Mobilization or Organizational Cooptation?", Public Administration Review, vol. XXXII, 1972, pp. 409-421.

31. ibid.

32. The best descriptions of the sometimes volatile, operations of these councils are to be found in Ralph M. Kramer, Participation of the Poor: Comparative Case Studies in the War on Poverty, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: 1969); and J. David Greenstone and Paul Peterson, Race and Authority in Urban Politics: Community Participation and the War on Poverty, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1973). See also on Detroit and Chicago, Rosenbaum, "Participation, Programs..." op. cit.

33. As cited in Levitan and Taggart, op. cit., p. 173.

34. Sar Levitan, The Great Society's Poor Law: A New Approach to Poverty, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), pp. 83-84; and Rosenbaum, Participation, Programs..." op. cit.

35. On the makeup of these councils, see Paul E. Peterson, "Forms of Representation: Participation of the Poor in the Community Action Program" The American Political Science Review, vol. 64, 1970, pp. 491-507.

36. On the relationship of these specific organizations to community action programs, see Larry R. Jackson and William A. Johnson, Protest By the Poor,

The Welfare Rights Movement in New York City, (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1974); Greenberg, op. cit.; and Rosenbaum, "Participation, Programs ..." op. cit.

37. Rosenbaum, "Participation, Programs ..." op. cit.

38. Peterson and Greenstone, op. cit.